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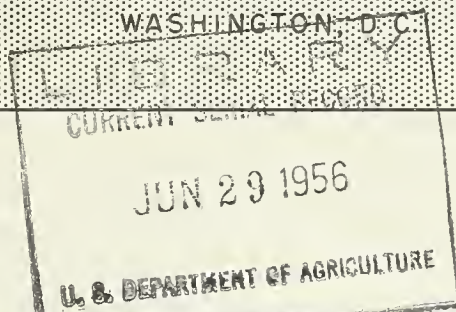
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# FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR

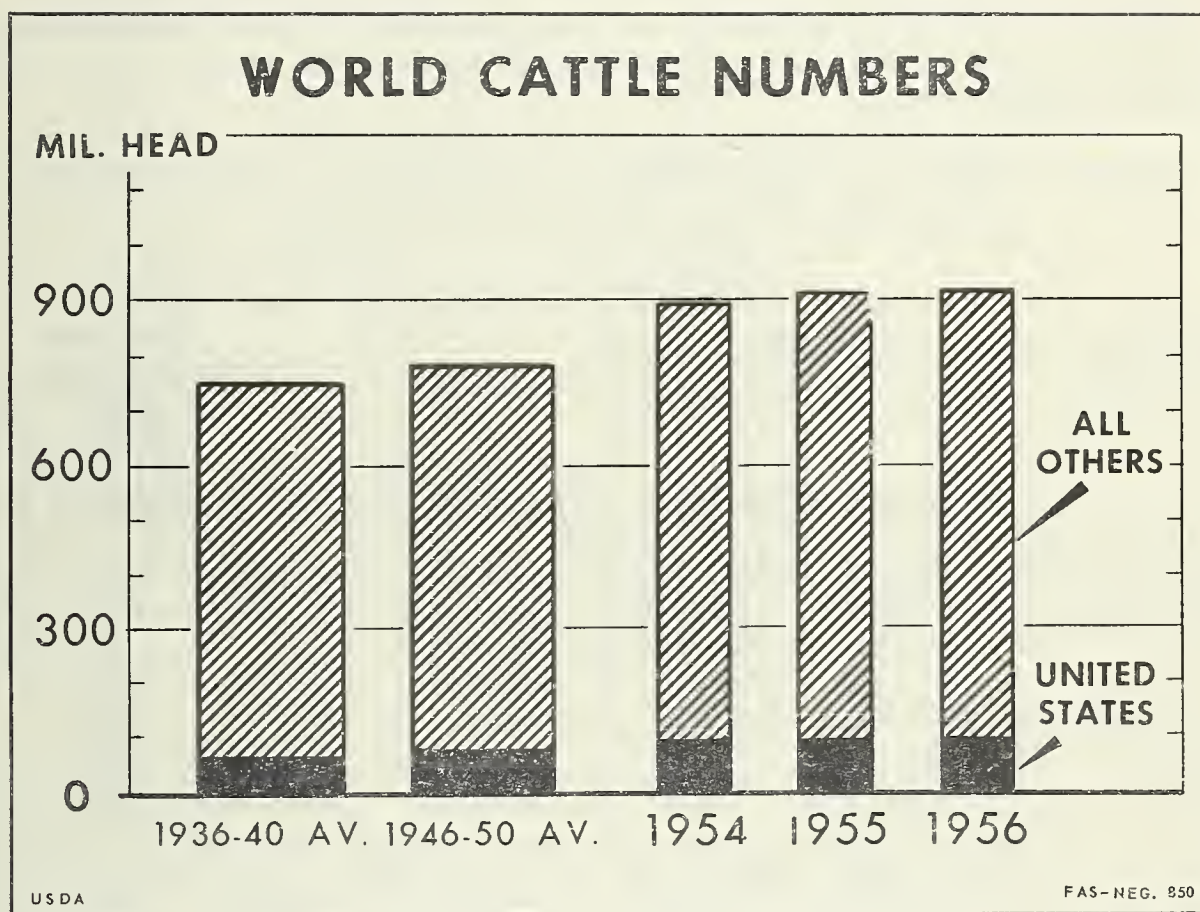
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE  
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## WORLD CATTLE NUMBERS 1955 AND ESTIMATES FOR 1956



World cattle numbers at the beginning of 1956 reached a new record high. Numbers in the United States also set a new record.

Cattle in the United States represent a relatively small proportion of the world cattle numbers. Nevertheless, the United States is by far the largest producer of beef in the world. Beef production in the United States is unusually large in relation to cattle numbers. In many countries cattle and buffalo are used extensively for draft purposes and production of meat and milk is of minor importance.



World cattle numbers at the beginning of 1956 are estimated to be about 918 million head, 1 percent larger than a year earlier and 22 percent above prewar. Numbers are now around 17 percent above the 1946-50 average. Water buffalo are included with cattle in countries where they are numerous.

World cattle numbers continued to increase during 1955 for the ninth consecutive year, but the increase was the smallest in several years. For several postwar years cattle numbers have undergone a rapid increase; they increased 36 million head in 1951, 23 million in 1952 and 20 million in 1953. The gain in 1954 was 15 million head and in 1955 only 6 million. Although the increase in numbers slowed during 1955, there were small increases for all major geographic areas.

Compared with prewar, cattle are particularly numerous in Africa, North and South America and in Oceania; in Europe and Asia they are only moderately above prewar.

CATTLE: Estimated world total, by continent or area, averages 1936-40 and 1946-50, annual 1955 and 1956

Continent or area	Average		1955 <sup>1/</sup>	1956 <sup>1/</sup>	Increase (+) decrease (-)	
	1936-40	1946-50			1956	1956
					1936-40	1955
	:Thousands	:Thousands	:Thousands	:Thousands	:Percent	:Percent
North America	: 96,700	: 112,700	: 133,800	: 135,100	: +40	: + 1
Europe	: 102,500	: 95,800	: 105,900	: 106,700	: + 4	: + 1
U.S.S.R.	: 59,800	: 50,800	: 64,900	: --	: --	: --
Asia	: 307,000	: 293,600	: 341,800	: 342,500	: +12	: --
South America	: 105,500	: 126,500	: 145,700	: 148,300	: +41	: + 2
Africa	: 64,400	: 86,500	: 97,400	: 97,400	: +51	: --
Oceania	: 18,100	: 19,100	: 22,100	: 22,600	: +25	: + 1
	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :
Total	: 754,000	: 785,000	: 911,600	: 917,600	: +22	: + 1
	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :

<sup>1/</sup> Preliminary

The long upward gain in world cattle numbers reflects a recovery in Europe from the low levels reached during World War II. It also was a period of generally rising prices of cattle in South America, New Zealand and Australia. Cattle prices in the United States and Canada rose materially from the end of World War II to 1952 and this proved a big stimulus to increased cattle production. The continued increase in Africa reflects



improved production practices in the warm tropical regions and higher returns from cattle production. The increases in the Orient reflect a steady gain in the need both for work stock and dairy animals in countries like Pakistan and India. In Japan, Communist China, the Philippine Republic and Korea the increases reflect the recovery from the effect of World War II and the Korean War.

The large increase in cattle numbers in recent years will be reflected in continued large world production of beef. Beef production could increase even more sharply if drought or other unfavorable conditions should cause a reduction in herds in one or more of the major beef producing countries.

World demand for beef continues strong, however, and the current large production is moving readily into consumption at fairly satisfactory prices to producers, except in the United States and possibly in a few other countries. Increased living standards in the Western Hemisphere, Africa, and Europe are contributing to the strong demand. The exportable surplus of beef from Australia and New Zealand is moving readily into World markets. A few countries in Europe, including France and Norway are experiencing beef surpluses, brought about by price support, and have been seeking export markets.

Cattle numbers continued to increase slightly in North America during 1955. Gains were noted in the United States, Mexico, Canada and Cuba.

During 1955 numbers increased slightly in Europe, but the changes for most countries were small. Numbers in France established a new all-time high. Meat prices in France are relatively high, prices to producers are supported by Government purchases of beef and special export programs are in operation to dispose of Government stocks.

Numbers probably also rose to a new peak in the United Kingdom, where government price support programs are offering a definite stimulus to greater production. Numbers increased in Western Germany, Austria, Greece, Ireland, and Italy. Denmark's total dropped slightly and is still below prewar. Apparently cattle numbers have about outrun feed supplies in a number of European countries in view of present patterns of crop production and other livestock numbers.

Cattle numbers apparently are continuing upward in Asia. The total for Japan is now 45 percent above the 1946-50 average and more than double prewar. Numbers in the Philippine Republic are larger than prewar and have nearly doubled since the end of World War II. Cattle have continued to increase in recent years in India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, South Korea and Formosa. In most of the Asian countries cattle and water buffalo are used principally for draft purposes. Milk and meat production are of minor significance. As the human populations of that



CATTLE: Number in Specified Countries, Averages 1936-40 and 1946-50, Annual 1951-56

Continent and Country	Month of Estimate	Average		1951 Thousands	1952 Thousands	1953 Thousands	1954 Thousands	1955 2/ Thousands	1956 2/ Thousands
		1936-40 Thousands	1946-50 Thousands						
NORTH AMERICA									
Canada	Dec. 1	1/	8,883	8,292	7,936	8,906	9,371	9,473	9,660
Costa Rica			366	556			696	804	
El Salvador	July		680	700	1/	515			
Guatemala	July		520	900					
Honduras	July		524			1,175	15,000	15,800	16,000
Mexico	Dec. 31	1/	3/11,716	14,700	1,140	1,250	1,200		
Nicaragua		3/	800	1,235	1,182	568	579		
Panama		2/	434	577		94,241	95,679	96,592	97,465
United States	Jan. 1		66,706	78,951	88,072	4,000	4,440	4,447	4,500
Cuba	Dec. 31	1/	5,024	4,500	4,440				
Dominican Republic	July	3/	885	887	860	860			
Estimated Total			96,700	112,700	122,600	129,300	131,800	133,800	135,100
EUROPE									
Austria	Dec. 31	1/	2,600	2,173	2,460	2,347	2,300	2,304	2,346
Belgium	Jan. 1	1/	1,724	1,674	2,020	2,151	2,213	2,252	2,250
Denmark	Dec. 31	1/	3,108	2,881	2,974	2,953	2,999	3,089	3,082
Finland	June 15	1/	1,850	1,598	1,814	1,809	1,885	1,902	
France	Oct. 1	1/	15,500	15,073	15,808	16,235	16,889	17,322	17,560
Germany, Western	Dec. 1	1/	12,114	10,831	11,148	11,375	11,641	11,521	11,552
Greece 2/	Dec. 31	1/	1,278	742	809	915	990	1,010	1,025
Ireland	June		4,021	4,093	4,376	4,397	4,504	4,483	
Italy	Jan. 1		8,550	7,838	8,331	8,690	8,989	9,033	
Luxembourg	Dec. 1	1/	108	114	118	124		127	
Netherlands	May		2,693	2,471	2,863	2,934	3,026	2,983	
Norway	June 20		1,390	1,226	1,231	1,152	1,181	1,171	
Portugal	Dec. 31	1/	832	975			930		
Spain 11/	April 1			3,206	3,150	3,128	3,184		
Sweden	Summer		2,959	2,705	2,633	2,554	2,582	2,575	
Switzerland	April		1,663	1,471	1,607	1,682	1,593	1,583	
United Kingdom	June		8,798	9,973	10,473	10,444	10,718	10,670	
Yugoslavia 2/	Jan.	1/	4,284	5,322	4,789	4,885	5,167	5,340	
Estimated Total			102,500	95,800	101,000	102,100	105,300	105,900	106,700
Western Europe									
Other Europe									
U.S.S.R. (Europe and Asia)	Jan. 1	5/	59,800	50,800	57,200	58,800	63,000	64,900	
ASIA									
Iran	March	3/	2,797	2,700	3,600	4,000	5,000	5,000	
Turkey 2/	Dec. 3	1/	8,611	10,826	11,071	11,363	11,803	12,005	
Pakistan 2/	Jan. 1	3/	33,000	5/30,000	29,650	29,049	29,320	29,500	
British Malaya			531	440	482	506	531	541	
Burma 2/	Dec. 31	1/	6,165	5,030		5,358	5,769	6,045	
Ceylon	May	1/	1,625	1,732	1,680	1,816	1,884	1,984	
China 2/ 13/	May	5/	37,100	33,100	34,800	37,300	40,700	2,030	
India 2/	Jan. 1	2/	180,000	178,200	180,227	199,271	205,300	209,000	
Indonesia 2/	Dec. 31	1/	7,669	6,330	7,318	8,417	8,838	9,090	
Japan	Feb. 1	1/	1,798	2,167	2,460	2,671	2,826	3,015	3,130
Korea - South	Dec. 31	1/	922	646	393	573	661	763	-867
Philippine Islands 2/	Jan. 1		4,148	2,340	3,058	3,178	3,272	3,939	4,268
Taiwan (Formosa) 2/	Dec. 31	1/	354	307	365	375	383	406	410
Thailand	Mar. 31		11,283	10,006	9,593	7,462	6,490	8,000	
Estimated Total 14/			307,000	293,600	299,000	320,800	337,900	341,800	342,500

## SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina	July	33,762	41,150	38,000	39,000	40,900	42,000	44,000	44,000
Bolivia	July	1,842	1,493	1,650	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850
Brazil	Dec. 31	40,807	46,200	52,655	53,513	55,854	57,626	61,422	64,000
Chile	June	2,489	2,345	2,186	2,293	2,409	2,409	2,409	2,409
Colombia	Dec. 31	8,010	14,148	15,512	15,090	13,000	13,650	13,650	13,650
Ecuador	July	1,300	1,520	1,300	1,200	2,000	1,216	1,216	1,216
Paraguay	Dec. 31	3,259	3,890	3,763	3,857	4,432	3,189	3,189	3,189
Peru	May	8,297	7,790	8,154	8,000	8,013	7,819	6,700	6,700
Uruguay	May	8,297	7,790	8,154	8,000	8,013	7,819	6,700	6,700
Venezuela	July	8,297	7,790	8,154	8,000	8,013	7,819	6,700	6,700
Estimated Total		105,500	126,500	131,200	133,900	138,300	140,400	145,700	148,300

## AFRICA

Algeria 16/	April	841	759	810	846	864	892	892	892
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan	Dec. 31	2,700	3,350	4,000	4,785	1,659	1,670	1,670	1,670
Belgian Congo (Ind. Ruand-Urundi)	Dec. 31	1,237	1,572	1,649	1,697	6,646	6,650	6,650	6,650
Kenya	Dec. 31	5,239	5,150	5,612	6,621	6,470	6,630	6,490	6,490
Tanganyika	Dec. 31	5,000	6,324	6,110	6,260	2,745	2,800	2,800	2,800
Uganda	Mar. 31	2,466	2,464	2,714	2,714	1,027	1,052	1,052	1,052
Basutoland	Feb.	437	430	401	409	424	421	421	421
Bechuanaland	Dec. 31	753	948	1,027	1,052	2,888	2,765	2,765	2,765
Swaziland	Dec. 31	407	436	417	409	20,200	20,000	20,000	20,000
Egypt 2/	July 1	2,076	2,810	3,000	3,021	4,192	4,274	4,355	4,355
Ethiopia (incl. Eritrea)	July	3,187	3,912	4,162	4,166	2,286	2,286	2,286	2,286
Federated Nyasaland & Rhodesias	Dec. 31	1,970	1,552	2,027	2,135	5,892	5,910	5,910	5,910
French Morocco 16/	Dec. 31	5,172	5,700	5,663	5,892	797	1,157	1,157	1,157
Madagascar 15/	Dec. 31	548	632	738	768	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400
Mozambique	Dec. 31	2,306	1,281	1,394	1,400	333	344	344	344
Angola	July	259	255	300	315	401	483	483	483
Spanish Morocco	Dec. 31	494	394	397	475	11,700	11,604	11,604	11,604
Tunisia	August	11,636	12,285	11,565	11,768	95,300	96,200	97,400	97,400
Union of South Africa	August	64,400	86,500	90,600	94,600	95,300	96,200	97,400	97,400
Estimated Total		13,285	13,971	15,228	14,893	15,247	15,601	15,823	16,200
Australia	Mar. 31	4,449	4,723	5,060	5,165	5,446	5,745	5,887	6,000
New Zealand	Jan. 31	18,100	19,100	20,700	20,500	21,100	21,700	22,100	22,600
Estimated Total		754,000	785,000	817,200	853,300	876,000	896,300	911,600	917,600

## OCEANIA

Australia	Mar. 31	13,285	13,971	15,228	14,893	15,247	15,601	15,823	16,200
New Zealand	Jan. 31	4,449	4,723	5,060	5,165	5,446	5,745	5,887	6,000
Estimated Total		18,100	19,100	20,700	20,500	21,100	21,700	22,100	22,600
Estimated World Total		754,000	785,000	817,200	853,300	876,000	896,300	911,600	917,600

1/End of year estimates (October to December) included under following year for comparisons and totals. Thus for Canada the December 1950 estimate of 8,292,000 is shown under 1951. 2/Preliminary. 3/Average for 2 to 4 years only. 4/June. 5/Census or estimate for single year. 6/Official statistics; may be under estimates of actual numbers. 7/September. 8/March. 9/Data include buffaloes. 10/Census December 31, 1934. 11/Cattle one year old and older. 12/October. 13/1952 data National estimate of China mainland. Excludes outer Mongolia. 14/Includes estimates for Outer Mongolia. 15/Data include only number taxed.

Compiled from official sources, reports of agricultural attaches and other U.S. representatives abroad. Data for countries having changed boundaries relate to present territory. Totals include estimates for countries for which official statistics are unavailable. Foreign Agricultural Service. April 1956.



area increase there are somewhat corresponding needs for more draft power to meet the larger human food requirements.

Apparently cattle numbers changed little in Argentina last year after reaching a peak at the first of 1955, but numbers increased considerably in Brazil. As numbers increased for several years in Argentina slaughter was held at relatively low levels. During 1955 slaughter increased sharply and apparently arrested the upward trend in numbers. Cattle prices in Brazil have been increasing although they are still under governmental control. Slaughter quotas may have restricted slaughter. Demand for beef has increased materially. There has been considerable expansion of cattle production in the tropical areas of the country and the development of new farms. Cattle production is developing rapidly in Colombia and Venezuela, with Government encouragement to cattle improvement and the introduction of cattle adapted to the tropical and semi-tropical areas of those countries.

Cattle numbers in Africa are now estimated at about 97 million head or about the same total as in the United States. Seven countries have more than 5 million head -- Kenya, Tanganyika, Ethiopia, French West Africa, Madagascar, Nigeria and the Cameroons, and the Union of South Africa. There is still a large potential for an increase in cattle numbers and production in Africa. This improvement will come about by the development of cattle better adapted to the area, improved husbandry practices, and better control of the tsetse fly, other natural pests and diseases.

The trend in numbers and beef production in both Australia and New Zealand is still upward. Widespread rains over most of Australia have caused keen demand for feeder cattle and increased prices. Cattle slaughter in New Zealand during 1955 was considerably larger than a year earlier; in Australia slaughter was about the same as during 1954.

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This is one of a series of regularly scheduled reports on world agricultural production approved by the Foreign Agricultural Service Committee on Foreign Crop and Livestock Statistics. It is based in part upon reports of Agricultural Attaches and other U.S. representatives abroad.

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